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LETTER DATED 26 MAY 1995 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

This morning we offered a letter to the Security Council asking for an emergency meeting of the Council in order to condemn the slaughter of 71 young people in Tuzla as a terrorist act. We did not ask the Council to authorize any new mandates nor order any action.

The Council did subsequently condemn through a statement to the press both the "shelling of the safe areas" and the taking of United Nations hostages. I am saddened to herald that this was a woefully inadequate response.

We are profoundly disappointed that the Security Council as a whole could not find the necessary collective will to call this crime for what it is - a terrorist act. This act may also be a shelling of a safe area, or reprehensible behaviour; however, it should be identified by the Council for what it really is. The Serbian command that ordered the firing of these mortars into Tuzla knew exactly who were the targets and intended this brutalization and murder of these civilians just as if they had parked a car bomb next to the targeted victims.

Why is this not a terrorist act in Bosnia and Herzegovina, but would be characterized as such whether in London, Paris, Washington, Moscow, Beijing, or any other town? I am afraid this is not just an issue of semantics or double standards. Some Council members are intent on characterizing the deliberate murder of teenagers in terms that allude to an act of war rather than an act of terrorism in order to preserve the option of once again accommodating the terrorist. We all know the logic of this terminology. One does not negotiate or compromise with terrorists, but respond with resolve. On the other hand, it is politically acceptable to negotiate, accommodate, compromise or even accept the realities on the ground when dealing with a "warring party".

Let us be clear. For us, the murder of 71 and the maiming of countless others in Tuzla is a terrorist act. It is up to the Council members collectively and individually to determine for themselves whether this, as well as the shackling of and threats against United Nations hostages, are acts of war or terrorism. However, one final observation: succumbing to terrorist demands breeds new terrorist demands and acts.

We once again appeal to the Council members to set aside semantics and collectively to condemn the murder of innocents as a terrorist act.

May I ask for your kind assistance in distributing this letter as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Muhamed SACIRBEY
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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